



Gender Equity Initiative

It is the Department's hope that all youth and adults, both male and female, may aspire to and have the opportunity to participate in Department sports programs that meet their interests and capabilities.

WHY DEVELOP A GENDER EQUITY INITIATIVE

In September of 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 2404 and made California the first state in the nation to enforce the civil rights of girls and community athletics in local jurisdictions and special districts. AB 2404 is more than girls playing sports; it is about building an entire community institution that respects the foundation of fair play and the relationship between our sons and daughters. Like our sons, our daughters should have equal access to fields, resources and play time. The City of West Sacramento Parks & Recreation staff believe not only that we are obligated to comply with the law, but that it is the right thing to do.

By January 1, 2011, this department must demonstrate that it has a strategy in place for making its facilities, programs and services compliant with AB 2404.

By January 1, 2015, this department must demonstrate that its facilities, programs and services are compliant with AB 2404.

GENDER EQUITY POLICY

It is the policy of Parks & Recreation to achieve gender equity in youth sports programs run by the Department as well as programs that are offered at City facilities. The Department's policy is:

- To encourage the participation of youth in sports and recreation programs and to provide opportunities to youth in a variety of programs geared towards the interests of the community.
- To address under-representation in sports programs where one gender or another is not adequately or proportionally represented.
- To improve the representation of females assigned to the administration of sports and recreation programs.
- To increase the number of female coaches, referees, instructors, mentors and other role models.
- To ensure the Department is equitable in its distribution of resources (i.e. facilities, quality of services, playfields, etc.) for all participants in youth and adult sports.
- To ensure regular reporting and monitoring of the Department's progress towards meeting its objectives.

PURPOSES

The purposes of the Department of Parks & Recreation's Gender Equity Initiative are to:

- Involve more girls and women in sports and recreation programs in the City by undertaking measures to encourage their participation and by providing opportunities for participation.
- Improve the representation of girls and women in sports programs where they are not adequately or proportionally represented.
- Ensure the Department is equitable in its distribution of resources (i.e. facilities, quality of services, playfields, etc.) for all youth sports.

It shall continue to be the Department's policy and practice to make every good faith effort to achieve the goals of the Gender Equity Initiative. It is the Department's hope that all youth may aspire to and have the opportunity to participate in Department sports programs that meet their interests and capabilities. It is for this reason that we have set as an ultimate goal developing youth and adult sports programs representative of the community they serve. In the setting of specific goals for improved representation of girls as provided in this program, the Department clearly understands that achievement of both short range and long range goals is dependent upon providing adequate opportunities to ensure the participation of girls and women first and a successful marketing plan to encourage them to participate. The overriding objective always is to provide each person real opportunity to develop and succeed according to his or her potential.

All staff and the program are committed to achieving equal representation in youth sports programs. It assigns responsibilities for Program development, enforcement, administration, and monitoring to the Recreation Superintendent, Recreation Manager, Athletics Supervisor, and employees, and calls for increased participation in program policy development, approval and enforcement.

In adopting the Gender Equity Initiative, the Department calls for the full cooperation of all employees in carrying out their program responsibilities to make equal opportunity one of the basic principles of youth and adult sports in the City.

Identification of Issues

- A. The Department will market the Department's youth sports programs to girls to encourage their participation.
- B. The Department Recreation staff must have a higher level of training with a focus on developing and running successful sports programs.
- C. The Department has determined that more female volunteers, coaches and referees are needed because statistics indicate that participation of girls in these sports increases when women coach and referee.
- D. The development of statistical reports to facilitate analysis of youth and adult sports is essential to the establishment of program priorities. Such reports should include attendance reports for all classes
- E. Opportunities for girls and women must be identified, expanded, enhanced and advertised.

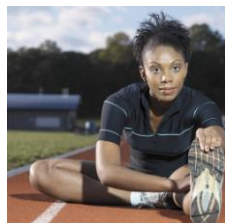


Goals

The goal of the Department Gender Equity Initiative is to achieve equity for girls and women in sports, increasing the level of female participation, female coaches, female staff, female volunteers, female officials and female mentors.

To facilitate the involvement of girls and women in sports programs, the Department has outlined several actions to undertake. These actions are designed to aid in increasing the number of girls and women in Department programs.

- Recruit, cultivate and train women, especially mothers and care givers, as coaches, officials, team supporters, or other roles in sports programs. This element will require both improved marketing and also training for recreation directors, particularly to learn culture and generational sensitivities and how to moderate them.
- Review girls and women's sports programs offered and add or redistribute programming within each recreation marketing district to ensure a broad availability of opportunities.
- Provide an array of clinics and seminars for girls and women to enhance the abilities of potential team participants.
- Recruit women athletes from local schools and colleges to volunteer to work part-time as mentors, coaches and role model for girls and women. This effort may be generated by individual recreation directors working with local schools, or it may be a district or Department-wide program with a college or university. A goal of this effort would be that every recreation center has at least one college or high-school level female athlete working with girls sports programming. Schools and colleges may be persuaded to provide curriculum credit for this assistance, or perhaps to develop courses that focus on gender equity issues and methods for increasing participation of girls. Trips for girls to attend high school and college women's sports events would be part of this program.
- Promote all physical activity programming for girls and women, in addition to traditional individual and team sports. This will have the positive effect of benefiting female health, helping them to enjoying physical activity, and involving them in the recreation center where interest in team sports may develop.
- Coordinate with organizations to increase programming, marketing, training and other opportunities. These non-profit groups can often be a conduit to corporate support for sponsoring and advertising programs.
- Solicit, either directly or with assistance of sports groups, the direct involvement of women sports celebrities to launch programs, visit centers, attend tournaments or banquets, and in other ways present exciting, visible role models.
- Evaluate and supplement as necessary the Department's sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policies, and design training programs to deter and prevent any misconduct due to increased female participation in sports and recreation programs.
- Collaborate with experts and outside interesting organizations to design effective programs and partnerships to increase participation.
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Monitoring, Reporting & Outside Review

A. MONITORING

Department staff will compile attendance sheet for the review of supervisors, managers, and available to interested parties. The Recreation Superintendent will monitor the Gender Equity Initiative by conducting a review of the Department's progress. The Recreation Superintendent will evaluate the Program's progress and take necessary steps to ensure its effectiveness.

To strengthen the quality and comprehensiveness of suggestion made to improve Departmental programs and correct under-representation, the Department shall develop a team monitoring approach, incorporating members of various divisions of the Parks & Recreation Department. It will develop recommendations to improve the representation of girls and women in sports programs. These recommendations will be reviewed and approved by the Recreation Superintendent.

B. REPORTING

The Department will report on the progress and achievements of the Gender Equity Initiative as necessary. The Department's Progress report will include:

1. A detailed analysis of girls' and women's participation in sports.
2. A detailed description of all revisions made to the program.
3. A description of programs the Department plans to implement, participate in, or complete during the next months to improve the representation of girls and women in sports programs. This must also include target implementation or completion dates for each program.
4. A detailed description of the difficulties which the Department has encountered in implementing its program and in meeting goals and timetables. The Department shall also note any actions that may be taken to facilitate attainment of the Department's goals.

C. OUTSIDE REVIEW

In an effort to verify that our policy, strategy, practices, programs and facilities for Gender Equity are well developed, implemented, and meet AB 2404's expectations for Gender Equity, our department would like to submit itself to outside review no less than every three (3) years. This review would be done by the members of another public park and recreation agency or by the faculty and/or students (under the supervision of faculty) from a park and recreation department at an accredited university.

By submitting ourselves for review we can identify our strengths and deficiencies. This will enable us to set new goals and objectives for making our department compliant with AB 2404. Outside review will also encourage us to make this policy and procedures for Gender Equity a standard that can become part of the department's best practices, and that can be a model for other park and recreation agencies.

HOW CAN I GET GIRLS INVOLVED AND KEEP THEM INTERESTED IN SPORTS?

Start them early. It's important for girls to become involved in sports at an early age. A University of Virginia study showed that if a girl does not participate in sports by the age of 10, there is only a 10% chance that she will be physically active when she is 25. But how do you get her interested in sports and keep them interested?

MAKE IT FUN

There is more to sports than fitness and competition; there is also the fun of participating. Many girls say that "fun" is their primary motivation for being active.

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

Parents are a main source of encouragement and motivation for girls to be active. It is important for you to encourage her. Go biking or walking together; take her swimming or rollerblading.

FIND A ROLE MODEL

Female athletes don't appear in the media spotlight nearly as often as male athletes. As a result, girls sometimes have a hard time imagining themselves in sports careers. A good role model shows girls what's possible; that females can participate in sports and succeed. A good role model could be an Olympic medalist, a sports writer or your next-door neighbor who runs regularly.

FIND THE RIGHT SPORTS

It's important to find the right sport, because a girl is not participating in a sport she likes, she probably won't stick with it. Ask questions to determine her motives and interests. Is she interested in a team or individual sports? Would she prefer soccer over swimming? Find out what she likes to do and what she thinks she's good at doing. Would she like to try something new? What kind of goals does she have? Does she like to compete, or does she just enjoy the activity? Also, try to expose her to a variety of sports and encourage her to find the right one.

Involvement in sports is a means of staying in shape and staying healthy. What we don't always realize is that physical activity also helps girls gain competence and self confidence. Sports offer girls opportunity to develop leadership skills and work as part of a team toward a common goal. Because many girls come out of adolescence with a lower self image and less confidence in themselves and their future than boys, confidence building is very important for girls.

**Physical activity not only builds muscles,
it also helps build self-esteem.**

A recent study of adolescent girls found that physical activity increases self-esteem, promotes a positive body image and helps girls feel better about themselves. Most adolescent girls say they enjoy physical activity, and girls who participate in sports are more willing to take risks and try new activities. These positive benefits of physical activity can carry over into academics and other activities, too



TIPS FOR GETTING GIRLS INVOLVED IN SPORTS:

- **CONTACT** your local City of West Sacramento Recreation Center for Program Information
- **SET AN EXAMPLE** by being active yourself
- **MAKE TIME** for exercise
- **DISCUSS SPECIFIC INTERESTS** and let her choose activities she enjoys most
- **SHOW ENTHUSIASM** - be a fan without expecting superior athletic achievements
- **GO TO HER GAMES**
- **PRACTICE** with her at home
- **SHOW AN INTEREST** in her achievements and in her concerns
- **MAKE PARTICIPATION FUN**, not a chore
- **ENCOURAGE** her to walk or bike with you
- **HELP HER SET GOALS** that are reasonable and achievable
- **BE AWARE** of how she is feeling physically and emotionally
- **EMPHASIZE ENJOYMENT** and personal improvement rather than focusing only on winning.

